



DEPARTMENT OF STATE INSTRUCTION

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SUBJECT: Congressional Visits to the Soviet Bloc

TO: BUCHAREST, BUDAPEST, MOSCOW, PRAGUE, WARSAW

RPTD INFO: BELGRADE, ROME, PARIS, BERLIN, BONN, LONDON, STOCKHOLM, HELSINKI

This instruction supersedes previous instructions furnishing general guidance on Congressional visits to Eastern European countries. Previous instructions on this subject may be destroyed.

Congressional visitors will increasingly be visiting countries of the Soviet orbit. Most of them will be travelling on official or semi-official business of the Congress, with their travel paid out of appropriated funds or local currencies, but will not be officially representing the Executive branch of the government. The Congressmen will expect, according to all indications, to be treated in much the same fashion as at posts in the free world. The Department is fully aware of the strain on the staffs of Eastern European missions resulting from the increased influx of members of Congress. In order to minimize possible difficulties for Eastern European posts, the Department will make every effort to brief each Congressional visitor prior to his departure from the United States, and to provide for briefing elsewhere if not possible to arrange here. Addressee posts will be advised in specific instances when they should endeavor to provide such briefings.

The following material will be covered in Congressional briefings, unless a post is informed to the contrary.

General Considerations:

The Department favors the visit of Congressmen to countries of the Soviet orbit, feeling that a first-hand view of conditions in that area will lead to a more realistic appraisal of the problems faced by United States policy makers in the area. However, the Department has refrained from urging any particular member to visit the area, since each member must decide independently whether it is in his own personal and political interest to visit the area.

Three factors characterize Congressional visits to the Soviet orbit:

- (1) The use Soviet orbit Communist Governments have or may attempt to make

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to make of Congressional visits to show splits in United States policy; and
(2) to give added respectability to their regimes;
(3) the difficulty which EE posts have because of their small staffs and because of their generally unsatisfactory relations with the local governments in making arrangements for the normal reception of Congressional visitors;
(4) the possibility of provoking certain countries to request reciprocal trips for "official" government personnel.

Relations with Local Soviet Orbit Governments:

The type of relations visiting members of Congress could best maintain to serve United States national interests during trips to Eastern Europe will depend upon the country being visited and upon the state of the political relations existing between that country and the United States. It is the hope of the Department that members of Congress visiting the area will rely heavily upon the American Chiefs of Mission in the area for guidance on such matters as:

- (1) Interviews with top officials
- (2) Relations with local parliamentary organs
- (3) Attempts to get in touch with relatives of American citizens

The Eastern European Missions will forward requests for interviews by members of Congress with top Soviet orbit leaders through the Foreign Offices concerned. During the past year, many large groups of members of parliamentary bodies from throughout the world have visited the Soviet orbit and have requested interviews with top leaders. Because of this large influx of foreign parliamentary representatives, there are indications that top Soviet orbit leaders are increasingly unwilling to receive western parliamentary representatives individually.

There have also been indications that at least the Soviet Government may hope to make the reception of American leaders by Soviet top officials a matter of reciprocity. To date top rank American officials have been unwilling to receive Soviet visitors.

Internal Travel Arrangements:

All members of Congress are urged, whenever possible, to make arrangements for Soviet orbit travel and lodging well in advance of arrival in Eastern Europe. In this way the official tourist agencies in these countries will be deprived of the possible excuse for not making appropriate arrangements because of insufficient time. Likewise, the United States Missions with their small staffs will be saved the added administrative burden.

In cases where it has been impossible to make such arrangements before arrival in the Soviet orbit, or when changes become necessary, local United States Missions will make every attempt to make such arrangements with the official travel agency.

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Members of Congress should be warned specifically of hotel shortages in Moscow, Warsaw, and Prague, and of difficulties in getting passage from Prague to points west. These travel difficulties are posed by the huge influx of delegations to Moscow and other EE capitals which has developed during the past year.

Assignment of Escort Officers:

All Congressional visitors are told prior to their departure from Washington that it is nearly impossible for the Eastern European Missions to supply Embassy officers to escort Congressional visitors. It is explained that this is due to the small staffs the Eastern European Missions are able to maintain and the need to use those staffs in support of the reporting program, on which the United States Government often depends for the most responsible first-hand accounts of events in the area.

If Congressional visitors insist on the need for an escort officer, the visitor is told that his request will be referred to the mission which will, of course, be as helpful as possible but must consider this request in the light of the personnel situation at the time. If it is unable to designate an escort officer at the time, the Department will so inform the member of Congress concerned. It is anticipated that the Department will refuse all such Congressional requests, with possible exception of senior members of substantive committees most closely concerned with the Department or senior members of appropriations committees.

(The Department realizes that it will be most difficult to assign an escort officer to one member of Congress and not to another. However, either a flat prohibition against the assignment of escort officers or a general agreement to provide such officers would seem to be an impossible course for the Department to take, and accordingly the current workload of the mission concerned will have to be the determining factor. Both the Department and the EE missions will insure that all EE missions included in a particular Congressional visit receive all communications concerned with it in order to help equalize the situation throughout a given trip.)

The Department repeats that there is a continuing possibility that in some instances the briefing for Congressional travelers outlined herein may be impossible prior to departure from Continental U.S. In such instances posts will be advised.

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